



Arizona Quality Alliance Performance Excellence Award Banquet

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer
Tuesday, February 7, 2012

Good afternoon, everyone! I'm honored to be here today, with so many outstanding business leaders and companies.

Let me begin by thanking Arizona Quality Alliance Executive Director Karen Shepard for inviting me to participate in your awards banquet – which gives me an opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your rejection of mediocrity -- and for your constant pursuit of excellence.

You all care deeply about quality -- and about performance – the same focus I've tried to bring to state government since I took the helm of this great state in 2009.

When I became Governor, I inherited the worst state budget deficit in the nation -- nearly 5 billion dollars across two fiscal years.

There was grave concern regarding our ability to meet our contractual and payroll obligations -- not only to state employees and agency functions -- but to school teachers, local governments, and private sector companies doing business with the state.

Well, we rolled up our sleeves and went to work.

We went back to the fundamentals – fundamentals that allowed us to grow and prosper from the very beginning -- while at the same time -- putting in place new and better ways of doing business.

After several years of hard work – after several years of tough decisions -- our plan worked.

My first act was to issue a moratorium on new regulations.

We then started with the first of my Four Cornerstones of Reform – making Arizona more competitive -- improving Arizona's position -- and incomes -- through an agenda of economic competitiveness -- reforming education and state government -- and a renewed fight for states' rights.

Today, I'm proud to say that we're back from the brink with a budget that's balanced -- and a cash balance that's positive -- for the first time in years!

Expenditures are down almost 20 percent -- and the number of state employees is down almost 15 percent.

Our state government is smaller with state personnel spending falling \$200 million between 2007 and 2011 -- a huge reduction!

Compared to the population we serve -- our workforce is one of the most efficient in the nation.

We've rescaled our state's largest entitlement program to fit the budget we have -- not the budget we want.

We've consolidated, eliminated or privatized operations across state government.

In the history of this state, no other Governor has cut state government more than I have.

And, we're not about to slow down.

As part of our economic competitiveness and regulatory reform agendas, State agencies will be transforming their operations through "lean" waste reduction principles and practices.

In state after state, these lean methods have reduced wasted time and effort, increased efficiency and improved service quality.

So, I'm creating a Government Transformation Office, within the Department of Administration, to implement a culture of statewide continuous improvement -- focused on education, process improvement projects, and capital impact.

Let me give you one more example of our commitment to efficiencies in government.

We immediately knew that one key to ending our budget crisis was the need to modernize state procurement.

The State Procurement Office, is located within the Arizona Department of Administration, and serves as Arizona's central procurement authority. It is responsible for the authorization, oversight and management of the contracting and purchasing activities of the State.

When I took office, there was no way to view purchasing activities across state agencies. Individual agencies were managing their purchasing manually -- and there was no way to track and analyze spending by vendor, no way to track vendor performance history -- and there was not very much collaboration with local agencies.

So, on September 1, 2009 we introduced a new system – called ProcureAZ – and the efficiencies – and the cost savings – that it has created have made Arizona a national celebrity.

The NIGP – the Institute for Public Procurement – named Arizona the winner of its 2011 Innovation Award -- which is presented to governmental agencies that have a great vision for public service and drive that vision through innovation.

What's more, a national procurement publication recently highlighted the success of our procurement system, noting that Arizona is now providing more vendor competition – participation -- and easier access -- all at lower costs and with more efficiencies.

The system's transparency is a benefit for local governments because the website allows them to view state contracts and vendors -- and they can also use it for vendor registration and solicitation.

At this luncheon today, I'm surrounded by people who have dedicated their professional lives to performance excellence.

And I congratulate the winners ...

-- Maricopa County

**-- Laboratory Sciences of Arizona and Sonora Quest
Laboratories**

-- University of Phoenix

-- Avnet, Inc.,

-- Rio Salado College

-- and Deer Valley Unified School District.

In closing, let me mention the mentoring program that the Arizona Quality Alliance administers with its partner, Intel Corp. Through Intel's "Skills-based Volunteering" Program, Intel employees are matched to organizations with volunteers providing mentoring and assisting organizations with training. Congratulations to Intel for this successful program.

And, again, congratulations to all of today's winners. I hope you'll continue to stand with us and partner with us as we seek to implement additional efficiencies in state government. You're a blessing for our state -- and a wonderful marker to celebrate as Arizona enters its second century.

Thank you, and God bless you all.